

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sun Jan 31, 2016

Good morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Sunday, January 31, at 7:00 AM. Today's advisory is sponsored by [**Soda Butte Lodge**](#) and [**Montana Ale Works**](#). This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Overnight the mountains picked up a trace to one inch of new snow. This morning, temperatures range from the single digits to low teens F and winds are blowing 5-20 mph out of the W-SW. Today, skies will be partly to mostly cloudy and there is a slight chance for a mountain snow shower this afternoon, but no real accumulation is expected. Highs will warm into the mid-teens to low 20s F and winds will gradually shift to the W-NW. No significant snowfall is expected over the next 24 hours.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

[Bridger Range](#) [Madison Range](#) [Gallatin Range](#)

[Lionhead area near West Yellowstone](#) [Cooke City](#)

The snowpack handled the latest round of snow pretty well. A few natural slides were observed on steep, wind loaded slopes yesterday, but overall avalanche activity was limited. While conditions won't be hair trigger today, I would still be extra cautious when traveling in avalanche terrain, primarily on wind loaded slopes ([video](#)). Yesterday, Doug was climbing in Hyalite and turned around before reaching his objective due to widespread wind slabs in the gullies.

Winds slabs that formed over the past 24-48 hours will still be reactive to human triggers, but I expect they'll be a bit more stubborn today. This creates a tricky situation as it will be easier to get lured into steeper terrain. Triggering a wind slab will likely require a skier or rider to travel onto the slab before it fails. This increases the chance of being caught. Pay close attention to the terrain above and below you, and always be thinking about the consequences of taking a ride ([photo](#)).

While most avalanches will stay confined to the new snow, there is the possibility of slides failing on deeper layers in the pack ([video](#)). A natural avalanche observed in the northern Gallatin Range last week is a good reminder of what's still possible ([photo](#)). Triggering a slide on deeper weak layers will be most likely in rocky, less uniform terrain where the snowpack is shallower and weaker. If an avalanche is triggered on a deeper layer, it will likely result in a large and dangerous avalanche.

Today, human triggered avalanches are likely on wind loaded slopes steeper than 35 degrees which have a [**CONSIDERABLE**](#) avalanche danger. All other slopes have a [**MODERATE**](#) avalanche danger.

I will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning by 7:30 a.m. If you have any snowpack or avalanche observations to share, drop us a line at mtavalanche@gmail.com or leave a message at 587-6984.

EVENTS and AVALANCHE EDUCATION

A complete calendar of classes can be found [HERE](#).

February 3rd Bozeman: 1hr Avalanche Awareness, Best Western Gran Tree Inn, 7:30-9:00 p.m.

February 6th West Yellowstone: 1hr Avalanche Awareness, West Yellowstone Holiday Inn, 7-8 pm

February 9th Bozeman: 1hr Avalanche Awareness for snowmobilers, Summit Motorsports, 6-7 pm

EVENT at BRIDGER BOWL: February 6, *King and Queen of the Ridge*. A day of hiking and skiing the Ridge as a fundraiser for the Friends of the Avalanche Center. Teams and individuals are welcome! More info here: <http://bridgerbowl.com/event/king-and-queen-of-the-ridge>